

FIRST RECORD OF REITHRODONTOMYS MEGALOTIS  
NORTH OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER IN ILLINOIS

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Abstract.--Reithrodontomys megalotis is recorded east and north of the Des Plaines and Kankakee River systems in Illinois. Habitat and associated small mammal species are briefly discussed.

The eastern movement of the western harvest mouse, Reithrodontomys megalotis, in Illinois has been documented by Hoffmeister and Warnock (1955), Klimstra (1957), Stains and Stucky (1960), Verts (1960), Stains and Turner (1962), Birkenholtz (1967, 1973), Pinkham and Meade (1970) and Stupka et al. (1972). Reithrodontomys megalotis has also been recorded in east central Indiana by Whitaker and Sly (1970). Records of R. megalotis are numerous west, northwest, and southwest of the Illinois River. Stupka et al. (1972) recorded R. megalotis west of the Des Plaines River in Will County however, it has not been recorded east and north of the Des Plaines and Kankakee River systems in Illinois or Indiana (Whitaker, personal communication). Specimens from an industrial development site seven miles north of Wilmington (T34N, R9E, Sec. 29) in Will County extend the known range of R. megalotis east of the Des Plaines River and north of the Kankakee River in Illinois.<sup>1</sup>

Small mammals were censused during September, December 1973 and May 1974 in four plant communities (abandoned field, wooded old field, marsh, and floodplain woods) on an industrial site and the adjacent Des Plaines Conservation Area. Two lactating adult females and one immature male R. megalotis were captured in the marsh community.

Herbaceous species associated with R. megalotis in the marsh were prairie cordgrass (Spartina pectinata), spotted smartweed (Polygonum punctatum) muhly (Muhlenbergia spp.), American bugleweed (Lycopus americanus), and common cattail (Typha latifolia). This habitat differs from those described by Hoffmeister and Warnock (1955), Verts (1960), Birkenholtz (1967), and Whitaker and Mumford (1972), who recorded R. megalotis occupied more xeric grassland habitats.

Forty small mammals were taken in the marsh in a 900 trap-night (TN) effort during September, December 1973 and May 1974. Reithrodontomys megalotis accounted for 7.4% (0.33/100 TN) of the total catch. Small mammals associated with R. megalotis included Microtus pennsylvanicus

<sup>1</sup> Skins and skulls are stored in the Industrial BIO-TEST Laboratory museum.

(1.67/100 TN), Blarina brevicauda (0.89/100 TN), Sorex cinereus (1.11/100 TN), Peromyscus leucopus (0.33/100 TN), and Mus musculus (0.11/100 TN). Similar small mammal associations were reported by Verts (1960), Birkenholtz (1967), and Whitaker and Mumford (1972).

The abundance of woody vegetation in the wooded old field and floodplain woods was the apparent reason for the absence of R. megalotis in those communities. Verts (1960) noted R. megalotis avoided wooded habitats in northwestern Illinois. The abandoned field provided suitable habitat for R. megalotis; however none was captured in this community. The abundance of Sorex cinereus, Blarina brevicauda and Microtus pennsylvanicus may have been a limiting factor.

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